

Subject: All CPF E-mail – BEST Newsletter Dec 04

Sent: Tuesday, 7 Dec 04

The purpose of this E-mail is to forward the Dec 04 Benefits and Entitlements Service Team (BEST) Newsletter.

Of particular importance are articles advising the following information:

- Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) Open Season ends on 13 Dec 04. The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) has posted a new High Deductible Health Plan with Health Savings Account Worksheet on their website that will assist employees in determining if a High Deductible Health Plan is right for them.
- The TSP Open Season will end on 3 Jan 05 rather than 31 Dec 04. According to 5 CFR 1600.12(b), when an open season ends on a holiday, it will be extended through the first business day following the holiday. As a result, employees will be able to submit their TSP open season contribution elections through the BEST automated web (Employee Benefits Information System - EBIS) and BEST phone system through 3 Jan 05.
- We have received feedback from employees who advise they are being told to submit their TSP Catch-Up contribution elections for 2005 before the TSP Open Season ends. We know it's confusing, but the TSP Open Season applies only to **regular** TSP contributions. There is no open season associated with Catch-Up contributions. The automated systems have been updated and employees may submit their 2005 Catch-Up contribution elections **beginning 12 Dec 04**. Catch-Up contribution elections submitted **prior** to 12 Dec 04 will apply to 2004.

Subscriber notification was released via E-mail the afternoon of 6 Dec 04. The newsletter can be viewed in Adobe Acrobat format at http://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/dpc/best/Newsletters/BEST_Newsletter_Dec_04.pdf and as Fax Document #6026 through the BEST phone system. In addition, it (and other newsletters and bulletins) may be found on the main Newsletter page at <http://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/dpc/best/newsletters.htm>.

If employees located in the United States have questions regarding articles in the newsletter, they may reach a BEST counselor by calling 1-800-616-3775 (press 2 for civilian, then 2 again for benefits and entitlements, and follow the prompts). Employees located in foreign areas will dial the toll-free AT&T direct access number for the country in which located, then 800-997-2378. Hearing impaired employees may reach a counselor by calling TDD 1-800-382-0893, or commercial 565-2276 if within the San Antonio, Texas area. Benefits counselors are available Monday through Friday, 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. Central Time.

If you have electronic capability, please forward the newsletter to all directorates/organizations at your base and ask that they forward it to all levels within their organization. As always, we appreciate your support.

Chief, Benefits and Entitlements
Air Force Personnel Center